SENATOR THE HON KATY GALLAGHER
MINISTER FOR FINANCE
MINISTER FOR WOMEN
MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE
MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

HON MARK BUTLER MP
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY AND THE NDIS
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGEING

HON AMANDA RISHWORTH MP
MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP
MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

Landmark funding to address historic gender undervaluation in care sectors

The Albanese Government is investing $630 million to deliver fairer pay to over 460,000 health, disability and community services workers following the Fair Work Commission's findings that these industries have been undervalued.

The Fair Work Commission's findings recognise that work done by women has been undervalued for too long because of gender-based assumptions.

The Commission's decisions to award pay rises to this critical workforce are a direct result of the Albanese Labor Government's reforms to put gender equality at the centre

of the Fair Work Act. Our $630 million investment will support charities and not for profit organisations that deliver Government programs to meet these wage increases while continuing to deliver the essential services that millions of Australians rely on every year.

Over 128,000 organisations funded under 92 programs will receive extra funding.

The funding will support providers to implement award-related wage changes while maintaining service continuity and quality.

This investment further delivers on our 2025 election commitment to work positively with the Commission on the Priority Awards Review and backs fairer pay for the workers in women dominated industries who keep our communities healthy and support Australians doing it tough.

Health, disability and community service workers provide essential care and support to Australians at every stage of life. They deserve fair pay that reflects their skills, expertise and the vital contribution they make to our communities.

The funding will also support Government-funded organisations that employ workers in other sectors affected by these award changes. For example, legal assistance workers, housing workers, youth workers, community development workers and First Nations health and community services workers.

With Australia's gender pay gap already at a record low, these reforms are another important step towards helping more women receive fairer pay that reflects their skills and contributions.

It's part of the progress we've made, with Australia now ranked eighth in the world for gender equality, up from 43rd when we came to government.

The Government will continue to invest in fairness and equality for all Australians.

Quotes attributable to Minister Gallagher:

“We cannot close the gender pay gap without confronting and addressing the historic undervaluation of work performed predominantly by women.

“Australia’s gender pay gap is at a record low, and this is another significant step towards ensuring women are properly recognised and rewarded for their contribution.

“This move is also a clear signal that this workforce and the support they provide our community is important and valued”

Quotes attributable to Minister Rishworth:

“For too long, work performed in female-dominated industries has not been properly recognised or valued, and women workers have paid the price.

“The Albanese Government changed the law to put gender equality at the heart of the Fair Work Act because women deserve to be paid fairly for the work they do.

“This Fair Work Commission decision is helping to address decades of gender-based undervaluation and deliver better wages for workers in health, disability and community services.”

“This is what closing the gender pay gap looks like in practice - recognising the value of women's work contributions and helping Australian workers earn more.”

Quotes attributable to Minister Butler:

“Work done by women has been undervalued far too long because of gender-based assumptions – our Government is fixing that.

“Health, disability and community workers provide critical services to help Australians in time of need and they deserve to be paid fairly for their work.

“This investment will not only help retain existing workers, it will make this sector a more attractive career path to build a stronger workforce for the future.”

Quotes attributable to Minister Plibersek:

“Behind every community service is a dedicated worker helping someone through one of the hardest moments of their life.

“Whether it's supporting a woman escaping violence, helping a family facing homelessness, or making sure someone has a warm meal and somewhere to turn, these workers change lives every day.

“Fairer pay will support a stronger, more sustainable community sector and ensure Australians can continue to access the services they need when they need them most.”

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